HEMPHILL IN PRINT...A PROVOCATIVE COLLECTION OF HIS VERSE, ESSAYS, AND COMMENTARY ON BEING BLACK, GAY, OUTRAGEOUS, AND UNABASHEDLY BRILLIANT

"When I die,/honey chil',/my angels/will be tall/Black drag queens," writes Essex Hemphill, who caught America by surprise—and grabbed our undivided attention—when he appeared in the controversial television film *Tongues Untied*. Now *Ceremonies* brings together his highly charged, emotionally resonant writings. Here he attacks Robert Mapplethorpe's portrayal of Blacks and takes the heat. He doesn't pretend the gay community is united or equal. He vehemently rejects popular notions of the Black gay man and works to integrate all his identities into a functioning self. This long-awaited collection lets us experience in one volume the dancing beat of his poetry, the pounding truth of his essays, and the pure sexual force of his autobiographical writing. The result is a ceremony of life—Black, gay, and totally authentic.

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—John Preston

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